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THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE "WE" SECTIONS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

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How alluring and yet how elusive is the personality of the self-effacing Diarist of the Acts! Modest to the last degree and yet dignified in his quiet assurance that he is an integral part of the most significant spiritual fellowship of his day, a hero worshiper, lost in admiration for his leader and yet singularly correct in his identification of really great events, and always unwaveringly convinced that he is observing and recording consequential affairs, he nobly deserves his place in the comradeship of the Book. The more, therefore, should we like to draw this quiet workman out of his namelessness, and set him in his true place as pioneer of those historians of the clearer insight to whom the expanding church of Jesus Christ has seemed the central fact of the world's life. Can we do him this right? I venture to hope that it may yet be possible.

The consequences, however, are far from being merely a matter of personal justice and recognition. No question is more fundamental to the whole structure of the higher criticism of the New Testament than is the long-debated problem of the authorship of these diary passages of Acts, bearing as they do every mark of being the priceless record of an actual eyewitness to the events described. As such they are the earliest bits of assured first-hand testimony which the New Testament documents afford. This primacy alone would make them of inestimable importance. But farther than this, they are inextricably interwoven with the problem of the authorship of the whole book of Acts, and so also of the Gospel of Luke. Indeed if we could unfold the original mystery

of these sections, it is at least possible that a flood of light would thus be thrown on both the literary and historical habits of the author of Luke-Acts and so not only on the validity and historicity of his results in both books, but also upon the whole Synoptic problem and the bases which lie under it. Indeed there is much to indicate that, with all the study which has heretofore been devoted to the Acts, it is not unlikely that just now the largest hope of critical progress in the New Testament resides in this book; and if so, the question of the authorship of these particular sections is of new significance.

Let us restate the elements of the problem. The "we" passages begin with Paul's departure from Troas on his second missionary journey. Thence the Diarist accompanies him to Philippi, where the "we" is discontinued. Apparently leaving this companion here, Paul goes on his way to Thessalonica and Achaia and thence to Ephesus and Jerusalem. The third missionary journey brings Paul back to Ephesus for a long stay and thence to Macedonia and Greece, whence he once more travels north to Philippi, where the "we" passages again begin. Thus after a separation of six years the Diarist apparently rejoins his leader at the very point where they had parted, the obvious inference being that the intervening years had been spent by him in some association with the Philippian church. Following the reunion a scattered use of the plural pronoun in the subsequent chapters of Acts indicates that he then accompanied Paul on the eventful journey to Jerusalem and Cæsarea and thence, in due time and on the same ship, to Rome, where the book of Acts suddenly, even abruptly, ends. This companionship from Philippi to Rome, covering the most intimate relations, must have occupied about three years. That a man should share with Paul these stirring events and be involved in such an endearing fellowship of suffering and peril during these conspicuous and conse-

quential years, and yet slip through the meshes of all the comprehensive personal references to the Pauline group, seems absolutely incredible. Paul's friends troop through the Acts and crowd the salutatory passages of the Epistles, yet historical cross-questioning has dismissed them all from probable identity with the Diarist. Gradually this process of elimination has seemed to leave but one possible name. Surely this dear companion cannot be unmentioned in the Pauline literature; he must be here; but of all Luke is the only possibility. So the argument has run. Strange indeed it would be if this long-time companion, whose acquaintance must have been scattered all along the line of his thousands of miles of travel with St. Paul, should never be mentioned in the greetings of salutation or remembrance; and yet are we right in the final selection among those who do appear? Was it Luke? Notwithstanding all repeated argument, the doubt has never rested.

Tradition indeed has consistently assigned the completed book of Acts to Luke. We may well surmise, however, that early opinion based itself merely on the same hopeless process of reduction which has been the despair of later critics, only Luke being left apparently as a possibility after the enforced elimination of every other hypothesis of authorship. Then too to those who understand the naïveté of early criticism it is highly suggestive that the phrase, "Only Luke is with me," furnishes exactly the soil out of which such a tradition would be most likely to grow. Nevertheless tradition, whatever its worth, is unanimously in favor of Luke. The consensus begins with the Muratorian fragment (170 A.D.), is accepted as a matter of course by Irenæus, a few years later, and is axiomatic with Eusebius; but beyond the mere matter of authorship there is no information additional to the biblical facts unless it be the Eusebian statements (*Hist. Ecc. III, 4.6*) that Luke was of Antiochean

origin and (*Hist. Ecc. II, 22.6*) that probably the book was written at Rome during Paul's second imprisonment. This of course refers to the book as a whole and leaves untouched the question of the original authorship of the "we" sections. Following this lead, however, those who are committed to the late date of the Acts, have sought refuge in the suggestion that Luke was really the author of these sections only, and that it was around this modicum of truth that the misconception which attributed the whole book to him grew up. On the other hand, those who assign to him the authorship of the completed Acts have felt the special difficulty of refusing him these portions of the book recording, as they do, those very experiences which it seems most possible that he might have shared personally. The atmosphere of the later days of the first century which seems to surround the Acts, together with the growing evidence of the composite nature of the book, certainly make it clear that the theory of the Lukan authorship of the whole book has much to explain; but in either case the theory of the Lukan origin of the "we" passages is germane and has thus a substantial basis in tradition. Is this tradition correct?

In answering the question our first duty is to discover from the "we" sections, if possible, the movement of events and the personal niche into which the undiscovered writer must fit. Of course it is possible that the original diary was much longer than is our present document, and that the compiler of the Acts used therefore only those sections which he found particularly *apropos*. If this is the case, the complete document might seriously modify or complicate the history of the Diarist as it lies on the surface of these excerpts. But there is certainly a strong presumption against this theory of abbreviation, particularly if the omitted sections included farther accounts of any personal relations with or even impressions of St. Paul. The compiler of Acts leans so heavily on

this document and evidently trusts it so absolutely that it seems unlikely, to say the least, that he would completely delete other portions which recorded further personal companionship with Paul. On the other hand, the "we" document, as it now appears, so evidently exists for the primary purpose of telling Paul's story that, in case it was originally longer, it almost certainly included the accounts of any additional relations which the author shared with Paul, if such there were. Of course such an argument cannot be final. It is only this: We have no suggestion of a longer document, and such negative evidence as we have looks quite in the direction of the view that we have in the "we" passages substantially all that this document ever contained *regarding the author's personal fellowship with Paul*. And the probable correctness of this view will be immeasurably increased if we can find any otherwise probable person whose movements fit well into the record as indicated by the document in its present form and limits.

A careful review of the document and also of the circumstances under which the Diarist first appears just as Paul is leaving on his first European adventure, suggests that this new companion must already have been a man of some proved capacity for evangelistic pioneering when he thus steps into our sight. We may certainly assume that no doubtful novice would be associated with a group which is about to enter upon such an epochal undertaking. Nevertheless, if we take the facts as they appear on the surface, this comrade had not previously been associated with Paul. For some reason his fortunes apparently first fall in with Paul's at Troas. At least this should be our experimental hypothesis, and our initial effort should be to find someone whose biography will fit into such circumstances and conditions. From Troas he will then go with his leader to Philippi. Here he will be on new ground, for the whole group is evidently

breaking fresh soil. They have no friends; no one meets them. Their first permanent lodging-place is in the home of a casual new acquaintance, the purple-seller, Lydia, into contact with whom the work accidentally brings them. From the day that the Diarist starts for Macedonia, concluding that with Paul God had "called us to preach the gospel unto *them*," it is evident that he was feeling his way into new surroundings. He is apparently not a Macedonian.

But soon the situation changes. Following, for the present, the omissions as well as the admissions of the document as our guide, it appears that Paul leaves the Diarist at Philippi. The latter is not the founder of this church; Paul is that; but he remains there possibly for six years, and is doubtless the chief constructive influence in the church. The qualities which suggested him originally for the enterprise point him out now to carry on the work in this important center and inevitably involve him in the gathering affection of this company of Christians. His life merges with their life, and it would only be what is natural should he become their most conspicuous representative and leader.

The Philippian church was *par excellence* a generous church. Paul had repeated occasion to refer to this outstanding characteristic. In the Epistle to the Philippians he records the fact that across all the stretch of time and distance this church was mindful of him and remembered him with gifts sent to distant Rome, the memory of which kindness was like sweet incense; and he recalls also that this generosity had been typical of the church from "the beginning of the gospel," for "even in Thessalonica," whence Paul went from Philippi, "ye sent once and again unto my need," and "no church had fellowship with me in the matter . . . but ye only."

Such a church must inevitably have responded to the appeal of Paul for the offering for the Jerusalem church.

This project of a general "collection" looms large in Paul's mind. Doubtless it had an irenic motive, but it was also important as a call to the development of a fundamental Christian grace. His letters to the churches flame with urgency that they make ready by a definite program for the hour when this gift shall be carried to Jerusalem. The formal presentation is to be a notable event, to be accomplished by a deputation composed of messengers (1 Cor. 16 3, 4) selected by the contributing churches in company with Paul himself, if he can go. This deputation is gathering about Paul when, after the six intervening years, he is rejoined at Philippi by the Diarist, who proceeds with the company to Jerusalem. Obviously the church at Philippi will have its leading part in this generosity. There would have been no title ever again to grateful remembrance in Paul's mind if it failed now. Giving generously, the Philippian church will also naturally have its delegate in the deputation. The Diarist gives us the names of the delegates (Acts 20 4). Various sections of the church are represented. Two go from the neighboring church of Thessalonica. Others represent various fields. But no one is *named* from Philippi. This situation can only be explained by the natural conclusion that the Diarist was the Philippian representative.

The importance of this collection-project as it lay in Paul's mind cannot be overstated. The fact that it was of really primary significance and of the highest ecclesiastical consequence is to be gathered from the constant reference to it in his Epistles. It is hardly open to question that the two brethren (II Cor. 8 18-23) who went to Corinth to forward the matter there were already the appointed representatives of the churches of Asia, that they therefore reappear in the deputation as it is later named (Acts 20 4), and that it is because of their commission to this important and responsible service that Paul digni-

fies them by the title of "apostles." In view of this designation, we shall expect the Diarist, as a member of the same group, to be held in like esteem, and we may hope to identify him under the same title of honor and authenticated responsibility; he will be an "apostle" — if this chain of consequences which we have thus followed is correct.

In any case men are known by the company they keep, and we may well draw near to the comrades of the Diarist for such suggestion as they have to give. Of three we know little, but of the others there is something of significance to say. It is the presence of Trophimus at Jerusalem that indirectly causes the trouble which ultimately sent Paul, a prisoner, to Rome (Acts 21 29), and if II Timothy 4 20 is trustworthy, he was at a later day a traveling companion of St. Paul. Of the remaining four, half of the whole number — Timothy, Tychicus, Aristarchus, and the Diarist — the singular fact is to be recorded that they not only accompanied the apostle to Jerusalem but they continued with him or followed him to Rome. In other words, the Diarist is a member of a deputation which is not only of such a formal ecclesiastical nature that its members might be designated as the "apostles" of the churches, but at the same time also, of such a private nature that they are in some peculiar way committed to the personal interests of Paul and to such fortunes or misfortunes as may befall him individually. Under such a dual relation as this the Diarist, if we identify him, must make his appearance.

With such a company the author of the "we" sections goes on his way from Philippi to Jerusalem. He is present at the conference with James and the other elders. Exactly how near he was to the person of Paul during the dramatic events of his arrest and subsequent local trials we do not know, but the intimacy of the account indicates that he was not far away. In any case he is one of the

two companions who, putting their lives in jeopardy, share the perils of Paul's voyage to Rome, as he goes under guard to make his appeal to Cæsar. The Diarist specifies that Aristarchus, one of the deputation, is the third member of the group (Acts 27 2). The plain indication is that his companionship — and if so, that also of the Diarist probably — is voluntary, but it nevertheless must have involved a sharp and perhaps compulsory submission to the limitations of the prisoner for whose sake they were known to be aboard. It is highly probable therefore that it is to this occasion which Paul refers when he later speaks of Aristarchus as his "fellow prisoner" (Col. 4 10), for Paul was not unaccustomed permanently so to identify those who had once shared his prison. He calls them fellow prisoners not as in the present but as having had this relation in the past. Indeed this is his only manner of using the term elsewhere (Rom. 16 7; Philem. 23). If it is indeed thus with Aristarchus, we have every reason to expect that Paul would think of the Diarist as also a "fellow prisoner," and if we shall later find that Paul does thus think of him, it will in turn strengthen our conviction that it is this experience with Aristarchus to which Paul refers when he describes him as a "fellow prisoner."

Thus after anxious days, in which his own life has been absolutely subordinated to Paul's fortunes, the Diarist comes to Rome. Up to this point he has followed the events of his leader's life with an absorbed and concentrated interest. He has absolutely risked all to see how it should fare with his hero at the final tribunal of imperial Rome. Now that leader is on the threshold either of an acquittal, which is to set him free for a world service, or else of a conviction which shall permanently terminate the great career; and yet just before this event is reached, the record stops.

What can this sudden ending indicate ? The strangeness of it all has begotten the theory that the Diarist, or perhaps, if he was a different person, the author of the book of Acts was really not intending to recount Paul's fortunes save as they were involved in the larger theme — how the gospel came to Rome. But if so, he passes over with absolute unconcern the fact that the gospel was already in Rome when Paul arrived, as the Epistle to the Romans and other evidence makes clear, and he shows no interest whatever in the origin of the Roman church. And even if this theory could possibly be correct, it does not explain why, after all our breathless suspense, the personal outcome to St. Paul should be eliminated as of no legitimate interest. There are but two possible theories of explanation for this strange conclusion. Either the diary has for some reason been decapitated, or else the manuscript came to an end because imperative events terminated the companionship thus suddenly. Now of course mutilation is always a possibility. As at the beginning of the manuscript, so at the end there may have been a process of surgery; but, as at the beginning so at the end, the conditions are such as to make this a secondary hypothesis, and our first search must be for some one whose companionship with Paul, otherwise also conformable to the Diarist's experiences, comes suddenly and perhaps unnaturally to an end soon after the arrival at Rome.

Such in general is the Diarist's history, and such is the niche into which the man and his experiences must be adjusted. The details may not be all exact but the main movement is unquestionably correct, and the more exactly the details correspond, the better the identification. Can such a person be found ? As we have thus reviewed his history and the qualities and abilities which it demanded, the more impossible it seems that so conse-

quential a person should slip unidentified through that remarkable drama in which he played so notable a part. Who then can he have been ?

Was it Luke ? Assuming this theory, the meagreness of the information regarding him is our first difficulty. So far as the biblical record goes, there is only Paul's statement (Col. 4 14; Philem. 24) during the first Roman imprisonment, that Luke, the beloved physician, sends salutation, and his additional and necessarily doubtful memorandum in the later Roman imprisonment (II Tim. 4 10) that only Luke is with him. So far as tradition is concerned there is only the record that he was a native of Antioch and that the *completed* book of Acts was his work. And this notwithstanding the fact that if he was the Diarist, he was an intimate and long-time companion of Paul in extended journeys, absorbing experiences, and extreme perils — an outstanding companionship. And yet while other comrades appear and reappear in salutations to and from the churches along the way and are mentioned as fellow prisoners, fellow travelers, apostles, etc., Luke slips by with never such a suggestion and only as one of the Roman group. How improbable this seems!

But the moment we seek to put Luke in the Diarist's place by means of the slight data we possess, the detailed difficulties accumulate. If Luke was an Antiochean, why does his companionship begin at far-off Troas ? He must have known Paul at Antioch. Why no mention of the companionship which brought them the long journey to Troas ? Or if such a record was there originally, then why was it submerged or eliminated when the rest of the document is counted so valuable and is used with such constant trustfulness and interest ? That Luke qualifies as the Diarist on the theory that he had lived in Philippi seems to me wholly unwarranted, as appears from the attitude of the missionary party to their evidently new

surroundings on reaching that city, and the suggestion of such a citizenship indeed appears to proceed wholly from the interesting desire to identify the Diarist with the "man from Macedonia" (Acts 19 9), a supposition which, while surely picturesque, is certainly contrary to the most natural interpretation of the following verse.

Proceeding then to the Diarist's prolonged residence at Philippi where he nurtured and developed the church from infancy to notable strength and prestige, how strange it is that no mention is made of him in the Epistle to the Philippians! This Epistle was written from Rome. If Luke was the Diarist, he was of course in Rome with Paul. He is mentioned as being there in Colossians and Philemon, evidently written almost contemporaneously. Other companions are mentioned in the Philippian Epistle, but this long-time sponsor of the Philippian church, if Luke be that, is never mentioned! The only possible explanation for such a strange fact is that Luke was away on a short visit. But even so, is it not strange that no mention even is made to this church of the pastor who has been Paul's long, devoted, and imperiled companion and to whom he is so profoundly indebted? Would it not be the obvious thing to explain the strange omission by at least a reference to the absence? How can less be possible?

And now of the journey from Philippi to Rome. If we are correct in identifying Tychicus and Trophimus as the brethren referred to in II Cor. 8, 18, 22, then it follows that Paul dignified the members of this deputation by the apostolic title (II Cor. 8 23), a recognition held in such high esteem by him that he counts himself a modest member of that high company. But if Luke was a member of this delegation, no such title is ever bestowed upon him. Again of the two companions with Paul on the sea-voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, if Aristarchus is later called a "fellow prisoner" (Col. 4 10), certainly no such

title is bestowed anywhere on Luke. He is simply the beloved physician and one of a large group of fellow laborers (Philem. 24). And of all the journey and shipwreck, no word!

Finally we come on to assured ground. Luke is evidently a somewhat intimate companion with Paul at Rome. This companionship is continued indefinitely, and, if we accept at all the guidance of II Tim. 4 11, reappears in the second Roman imprisonment, where he is left, the only living witness, to give his invaluable testimony. But the surer we are of this, the more inevitably does the question arise why this faithful Diarist should have left the record of his hero, just as he was on the very threshold of a decision at the hands of the world's highest tribunal, with no word of the result or of those subsequent events with which Luke of all others was surely familiar. How strange the conclusion by which an informed comrade withholds the dénouement of Paul's whole dramatic appeal to Rome! Granted even that the personal outcome was not the main concern of the writer's purpose in the book of Acts, it yet remains most inexplicable that this loyal lieutenant, risking all in a crusade with his captain, should dismiss the outcome of those fortunes as unworthy even of passing mention. But of all this there are only the two closing verses of the Acts. The record ends with the *arrival* at Rome. All else is silence. Again the question presses home with redoubled force: Why does the diary end here? Was it originally longer, and if so, why was it abridged? To be sure, all this is negative evidence. But how overwhelmingly cumulative it is! The Lukan theory certainly raises more questions than it solves. Is it the best we can do? If so, we are left in dismay.

I believe this is by no means the best we can do, and I desire to point out the remarkable array of facts which indicate that Epaphroditus (Phil. 2 25; 4 18) who,

as I believe, is identical with Epaphras (Col. 1 7, 4 12; Philem. 23) is the lost Diarist.

The view that these two names belong to one and the same person has long been recognized as the simplest and most plausible theory, but thus far it has run athwart difficulties which have seemed very perplexing but which may presently be entirely cleared away. Epaphras is a shortened form of Epaphroditus. The latter name is used in the Epistles to Philippi and Ephesus; the former in the Epistles to Colossæ and Philemon of Colossæ. All the Epistles were written at Rome and at almost the same time. To hold that these names represented two persons involves the difficult replacement of one man by another of like name in the little circle of workers at Rome. One man is present, the other absent; the second arrives and the first disappears; and the names so nearly identical, and neither appears elsewhere. But in view of the difficulties mentioned above it has seemed the simplest theory.

These difficulties are all contained in the misinterpretation of Philippians 4 18, and it is on this rock that the whole search for the Diarist has been diverted from its true course. In this passage Paul, writing of course from Rome, expressed gratitude to the Philippians, "having received *from* Epaphroditus the things from you." This has been uniformly assumed to mean that after Paul reached Rome the Philippians becoming aware of his need sent Epaphroditus to him bearing certain tokens of love. If Epaphroditus thus came direct from Philippi to Rome *after* Paul arrived there, he could not have been the Diarist who journeyed *with* Paul via Jerusalem. But a more careful examination of the passage, however, makes it unlikely that Epaphroditus was in this sense the bearer of these gifts;¹ and it will be pointed out that the con-

¹ The linguistic facts clearly support the suggestion here made. "From Epaphroditus" exactly duplicates the preposition of "from you." It is the *παρά* of

ditions and simplicities of the situation are better satisfied if we suppose that Epaphroditus was already in Rome with Paul, and that the Philippian church with characteristic thoughtfulness sent a gift to their pastor who we know was ill in Rome, and included with it some remembrance to Paul, which was passed on to him *from* Epaphroditus. In any case Paul could not have better described a gift received under such wholly plausible circumstances.

Indeed when we come to study the details of the event this view strangely fits in with the known facts. Epaphroditus had been seriously ill at Rome; his life had been despaired of, and we know farther that the Philippian church had heard of his condition and was seriously distraught over it (Phil. 2 26). How could it be possible — particularly if there had been a long and hazardous separation — that the Philippian church should do other than send succor to their absent pastor? And, so doing, how could they possibly fail to make some kindly enclosure to Paul? The fact is, as we shall see, that many cumulative indications point to the conclusion that Epaphroditus had made the long journey *with* Paul as the Philippian representative, and that his supposed journey from Philippi direct to Rome bearing the Pauline gift is wholly a misinterpretation of the passage referred to. *Per contra*, it is only necessary to point out the difficulties of any other view. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the declared ignorance of Paul regarding the condition of the Philippian church, when he addressed the Epistle. If we accept the theory of a special journey, only a few months at most can have elapsed since Epaphroditus left Philippi, well aware of the situation through long years of spiritual intimacy and leadership; and yet Paul proposed to send

source which is used in each case and not the *διὰ* of *agent*. Regarding the distinction Paul is extremely careful. Romans 1 5 presents an exact parallel, where agency is intended. See also Gal. 1 1, 12.

Timothy thither that he may secure report of the state of the church (Phil. 2 19); as if Epaphroditus, "brother, fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier," was not qualified to give such a report. But if it is four years since such personal news has come, the situation becomes entirely transparent.

But this difficulty is only the beginning of the considerable series of perplexities in which the theory involves us. It is evident that some little time must have elapsed after Paul's arrival in Rome before the Philippian church could know that he was there, or, even so, would long remain there. Indeed the supposition was quite otherwise. He had appealed for a Roman release. Moreover there was nothing to indicate that he was in any such special need as to warrant so notable an embassy. Nor is there anything in Paul's remark to indicate that the Philippian gift was of such a material or consequential size as to demand so important a bearer. The reference, crowded as it is into the closing paragraphs of the Epistle, is quite to the contrary. How improbable that the Philippian pastor should be sent on this long journey with such a present! This is very different from asking a convenient traveler to bear help to their own pastor who, they know, is seriously ill in Rome and of whose illness we are particularly informed that the Philippians had heard.

Then, too, the theory involves an amazingly swift and complicated program for Epaphroditus. First, the Philippian church must become aware that Paul is in Rome and that the conditions are such as to keep him there. Then there must be the movement to send him a gift of such consequence that no one less than the pastor should be sent to bear it. Then there is the journey. Then there must have been some experience in which the messenger hazarded his life for Paul's sake (Phil. 2 30). Then, if Epaphroditus and Epaphras are identical, he must somehow have been arrested and singularly enough

become Paul's fellow prisoner (Philem. 23); then there must have followed the long, serious sickness — so prolonged indeed that the Philippian Christians can hear of it, and Epaphroditus be so troubled by the knowledge that they have heard of it (Phil. 2 26) that on his recovery he is eager to be back among them. Surely this is a tolerably eventful experience if it must be crowded into this short trip. By far the simpler view is that Epaphroditus never made such a trip, and if not, that he came to Rome with Paul as the Diarist.

Once we are relieved of this burdensome misconception, how simply and accurately every item slips into its natural place. The "we" document begins at Troas, which was in the same Roman province with Colossæ where Epaphroditus had been at work (Col. 1 7; 4 12, 13). Let us revive the situation in our minds. As Paul was starting for Antioch in the third journey his party had suddenly been disrupted by the loss of his strong companion Barnabas. He then took Silas, but in no sense could the latter make good the place of the former; he was distinctly a satellite. So Paul is on the watch to recruit his broken group. At Lystra he claims Timothy, also a distinctly younger disciple. What more natural than at Troas, facing the immediate call into the Great Adventure, he should feel the need of some experienced and successful pioneer of the gospel, and again what more natural than that he should turn to the approved founder of the near-by churches of Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4 13). Of this notably successful evangelist Paul must have long known, but all the evidence goes as well to show that thus far they had never labored together. So large a field must have long and exclusively occupied Epaphras, and, on the other hand, we know in particular that Paul had never visited these churches (Col. 2 1). On this very journey we are specifically told that Paul passed hurriedly to the north of this

region, "having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16 6), and hastened direct to Troas. There, suddenly called to venture on the European crusade, he solicits the experienced services of Epaphras, near at hand, who joins him at Troas. In a word, the Diarist has had no previous personal experience with Paul to record. The document began at Troas substantially as we now have it, and no excuses are necessary for any elimination of earlier portions.

So the Diarist comes to Philippi. Here also the events are equally obvious. The experience of Epaphras at Colossæ has fitted him for the constructive work in the first European center. He has been known more familiarly in his native region as Epaphras. Here he takes the more dignified title of Epaphroditus. Here the Diarist, whoever he is, stayed for the six eventful and formative years weaving his life into the affections of the Philippian Christians. Who can this possibly be but Epaphroditus, as his likeness is drawn for us in the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians? We are here told in detail that Epaphroditus belongs to the Philippian church; he is their outstanding representative (Phil. 2 25); their hearts are bound up in him and he is longing to be back with them; and to them Paul sends him back, with the Epistle, as evidently to his own people (Phil. 2 25, 26). While he is still remembered affectionately in Colossæ, his home and heart have been essentially transferred to the loving and generous church at Philippi. So exactly does the photograph fit and so accurately are we led by the appearance of this plural personal pronoun.

But if all this is true to life, how much more amazingly clear and detailed is the identification of Epaphroditus in the journey from Philippi to Rome. As pointed out above, the Diarist was obviously the representative selected for Philippian membership in the collection deputation. How accurately the experiences of Epaphroditus

fit into such a commission both in its public capacity and in its personal relations to Paul is fully set forth in Philippians 2 25-30. Now that we are relieved of the misconception that these verses relate to a later journey, we see at once how adequately and exactly the passage refers to the conditions and circumstances of the Diarist's journey. Instead of the unaccountable silence regarding him in all Pauline literature which has seemed so amazing, we at once find that this situation has been due only to our oversight of most ample and appreciative references to him which are really wonderfully clear.

We have seen, for example, that Paul's conception of the deputation is so lofty that he calls the members of it *apostoloi*, using this rare and sacred designation. Now strangely enough he gives this very designation to Epaphroditus (Phil. 2 25) setting him forward alone out of the Roman group, with the exception of Timothy, also a member of the same deputation, to bear this title. Conceiving that this designation of Epaphroditus referred merely to the supposed later journey of personal service, the English translators have been unable to understand Paul's use of this high term for a simple and individual kindness to himself, and have softened the word into "messenger."² Thus is Paul supposed to doze regarding his high church conception of apostleship. But Epaphroditus' title to the name is now perfectly clear; with the rest of the deputation he is to Paul, for that reason, an apostle.

² Strangely enough, the only other place where the accurate translation is thus abandoned by the Revisers is in the reference (II Cor. 8 23) to the other members of the same deputation. Not realizing that they are such, and that they have already thus been appointed not only to carry the collection but also to promote it, and failing also, as I think, to realize how large the whole project bulked in Paul's mind, they have here also softened the word into "messenger," thus throwing confusion into the whole Pauline use of the word. The identification of all these members of the group as in Paul's mind entitled to the name "apostle," helps most significantly to clarify for us the whole Pauline conception of this office, regarding which he is so deeply concerned (I Cor. 9 1, etc.).

We have seen, however, that membership in that group was not solely a public ministry. In some sense it involved a commitment to Paul's personal fortunes or misfortunes. Four of the group, at least, did not stop at Jerusalem, having fulfilled the collection service, but went on to Rome, though only two, Aristarchus and the Diarist, seem to have traveled in the same ship with Paul. This dual relationship is exactly reflected in this Philippian reference to Epaphroditus. He is there "your apostle and minister to my need." Is it possible that the actual relation of the Diarist to Paul could in any way be better described?

And now about the experiences of the journey itself, its labors, its risks, its hardships, its intimacies, and finally its perilous shipwreck and the rescue; has this all slipped from Paul's memory, and particularly has the Diarist, the only comrade with him and Aristarchus in the ship of his imprisonment — has he disappeared? Not at all. In later years, as has been pointed out, Aristarchus was remembered as a "fellow-prisoner" (Col. 4 10), and so also (Philem. 23) is Epaphroditus. And he is the only other person at Rome besides Aristarchus who is so denominated. And as for the other circumstances of the journey, what could be more adequate and exact than the passage in Philippians (2 25-30): "I . . . send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your apostle and minister to my need . . . for indeed he was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy . . . on me . . . that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow. . . . Receive him . . . and hold such in honor; because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me." So tenderly and loyally does Paul remember his comrade of the terrible voyage.

Thus did the Diarist Epaphroditus come to Rome. From that time on the developments are equally natural

and simple. Arrived in Rome, Epaphroditus soon falls seriously ill (Phil. 2 27). Perhaps it is not rash to suggest that the record indicates that the exposures and dangers of the voyage had something to do with this. At any rate the active companionship with Paul ends. The illness is long enough continued for the Philippian church to hear of it (Phil. 2 26) and to send some ministration to his need, in which was also included a remembrance to Paul (Phil. 4 18). Convalescing, Epaphroditus turns longingly (Phil. 2 26) to the faithful friends of the Philippian church from whom he has now been separated for years and among whom his affections have taken deepest root. He is indeed Paul's companion only by virtue of the fact that he is the officer and representative of that church. If Paul desires a detailed and personal report of conditions at Philippi, another messenger must go (Phil. 2 19), for Epaphroditus departs not to return; his companionship with Paul is over at least for many a day. This disposition to return fits in with the mood of Paul to communicate with the church at Philippi. Indeed this mood seems to be more inclusive. In his confinement he broods over the condition of the churches which he has cherished. Every word regarding them is a matter of deep concern to him. Not only Philippians but Colossians and Philemon are the evidence, to say nothing of the Ephesian and Laodicean Epistles. These were evidently written not far apart, and it is at least possible that the convalescent Epaphroditus carrying the Epistle to the Philippians is accompanied nearly to his home by Tychicus (Col. 4 7, 8), bearing the Colossian Epistle. Indeed it looks as if the delegation of the churches was now finally breaking ranks. In such company and under such circumstances does Epaphroditus turn homeward and disappear from us down the Philippian way.

The final and perhaps, individually, the most striking piece which now fits into the convincing completeness of

this remarkable mosaic is the very fact which heretofore has been so inexplicable — the "we" record ends after the first few days in Rome. This is precisely where it should end — with the termination of the intimate companionship of Paul and Epaphroditus. It is not unlikely that the diary was cut short by the illness of the writer and that the record was never resumed. In any case, here is no strange decapitation of a priceless document. It began with the writer's personal experience of Paul; it was dropped when they temporarily separated; and it ended with their parting at Rome; and the manuscript in its entirety is embedded in the book of Acts exactly as its evident value would lead us to expect.

The particular thesis is here ended; but from this new assurance we inevitably look off into other and most suggestive areas. Did the invalided Epaphroditus ever reach Philippi? Did his record include originally only the strictly "we" passages, and were the interstices filled in later or by other hands? With his historical interest facilitated by his long delay at Jerusalem, was it he who accumulated the other memorials of the early church which are involved in the Acts, and did he carry them back to Philippi where they were later woven into the one fabric? Or was his document with others left at Rome in the hands of Luke, his attending physician, and was it there inwrought, a shining thread, into another's narrative of the advancing dominion of the Master? Is it possible that Luke's association with the Acts is due to the fact that the basal documents were passed on to the Redactor through him? Or is it more likely that the elimination of Luke from earlier association with Paul, and so from any personal acquaintance with the details of the ecclesiastical beginnings, makes it possible that he was comparatively young when he first appears at Rome, and therefore was perhaps himself this late, and in many respects, uninformed Redactor? Was it his deliberate

thought to confine himself in Acts to an editing of the manuscripts of others, as he did also in the Gospel, thus covering a period with which he, and possibly Theophilus, had no personal association? Was it perhaps his plan to add a third book which should give his own reminiscences of later days, thus taking up the thread himself where others had left it? These are most interesting questions. In the growing light that is falling upon these early days of the church and the identification of the Aramaic Greek sections of the earlier part of the book, it may not be impossible that these questions shall yet have their illuminating answers.